

Message Text

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4194

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SUBJECT: CULTURAL INITIATIVES

REF: STATE 096982

1. USIS ECUADOR HAS ALREADY ENGAGED HOST COUNTRY INSTITUTIONS IN SEVERAL AREAS, AS DEMONSTRATED BY THE UNIQUE COST-SHARING SCHOLARSHIP PLAN OF THE FULBRIGHT COMMISSION AND AN EXTREMELY HIGH LEVEL OF COOPERATION BETWEEN THE POST AND THE GOE'S PREMIER CULTURAL ENTITY, THE "CASA DE LA CULTURA", AS WELL AS THE MINISTRY OF EDUCATION (FREE USE OF HOST COUNTRY FACILITIES FOR PROGRAMMING, CO-SPONSORSHIP, ETC.).

2. TO ENGAGE MORE ACTIVELY THE "CREATIVE THINKERS, WRITERS AND OTHER TALENTS" OF THE HOST COUNTRY, THE MAJOR CHANGE MUST BE IN FOCUS AND FUNDING. SOME SPECIFIC PROPOSALS:

(A) CONSIDER JOINT COST-SHARING PROGRAMS WHICH WOULD INCLUDE NATIONAL WRITERS, ARTISTS AND INTELLECTUALS ALONG WITH APPROPRIATE U.S. COUNTERPARTS IN SEMINARS, EXHIBITS, ETC., BOTH IN THE U.S. AND IN ECUADOR. THIS WOULD ENHANCE THE PROFESSIONAL REPUTATIONS OF THE HOST COUNTRY PARTICIPANTS AND ACTIVELY ENGAGE THEM IN CULTURAL EXCHANGE WITHOUT CREATING CHARGES OF U.S. "CULTURAL IMPERIALISM" WHICH COULD ARISE FROM A SUBSTANTIAL UNILATERAL

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EFFORT BY THE U.S. IN THIS AREA. CONTINUED PRIORITY SHOULD BE GIVEN TO PROGRAMMING RETURNED GRANTEES.

(B) PROVIDE AT LEAST ONE MAJOR ANNUAL CULTURAL PRESENTATION OF THE STATURE OF THE PHILADELPHIA ORCHESTRA, AMERICAN BALLET THEATER, ELIOT FELD BALLET. THESE PRESENTATIONS ARE MUCH MORE EFFECTIVE THAN MANY MINOR ONES.

(C) UPGRADE THE LEVEL OF SPEAKERS AND EXHIBITS TO INCLUDE

TOP-FLIGHT AMERICAN INTELLECTUALS SO THAT THE HIGHEST LEVEL OF AMERICAN CULTURE IS PRESENTED HERE. THE LEVEL OF TOPICS SHOULD ALSO BE SUFFICIENTLY HIGH TO INTEREST THESE POTENTIAL PARTICIPANTS.

(D) RE-EVALUATE VISA ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS WHICH BAR POTENTIAL PARTICIPANTS FROM VISITING THE U.S. AND MAKING FIRST-HAND OBSERVATIONS ABOUT THE "FREE EXCHANGE OF IDEAS."

(E) INCREASE ALLOTMENT TO PEOPLE-TO-PEOPLE PROGRAMS SO THAT THEY COULD BE MORE EFFECTIVE.

(F) TAKE SERIOUSLY THE IMPORTANCE OF SPORTS EXCHANGES AS SHOWN BY THE EXAMPLES OF CUBA AND THE PRC AND INCREASE FUNDING ACCORDINFLY.

(G) AUGMENT RATHER THAN DECREASE BUDGETS FOR BINATIONAL CENTERS.

3. TO SUM UP, THERE IS NO SHORTAGE OF IDEAS OR INTEREST IN CULTURAL EXCHANGE. IN ECUADOR, ALL SEGMENTS OF THE LOCAL POPULACE HAVE EXPRESSED SOME INTEREST IN U.S. CULTURE AND ALL OPPORTUNITIES ARE USED TO THE UTMOST IN PROGRAMMING ON A SHOESTRING BUDGET. THE MAJOR BARRIERS HERE ARE THE PITIFULLY SMALL BUDGET ALLOCATION TO CULTURAL PROGRAM WHICH CANNOT HELP BUT GIVE THE IMPRESSION OF A CORRESPONDINGLY LOW U.S. INTEREST.

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